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Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Seventieth session
Bangkok, 23 May 2014 (Phase I)
Item 5 of the provisional agenda*
Evaluation pursuant to resolution 67/4: Establishment of the Asian and Pacific centre for the development of disaster information management

Evaluation pursuant to resolution 67/4: Establishment of the Asian and Pacific centre for the development of disaster information management

Summary

The Commission in its resolution 67/4 requested the Executive Secretary to support the process for the establishment of the Centre, including the development of the required modalities and arrangements for its operationalization.

The Commission also requested the Executive Secretary to include in the secretariat's evaluation plan for 2013 an evaluation of the activities listed in paragraph 4 of the resolution and the need for, and benefit of, establishing the Centre as a subsidiary body of the Commission for the development of disaster information management, and to submit the results of that evaluation to the Commission at its seventieth session. In this regard, the secretariat was requested by the Government of the Islamic of Republic of Iran to postpone the evaluation of the centre until the end of 2014.

The Commission may wish to consider the information contained in the present report and provide the secretariat with further guidance.

1. The Commission in its resolution 67/4 requested the Executive Secretary to support the process for the establishment of the Asian and Pacific centre for the development of disaster information management, including the development of the required modalities and arrangements for its operationalization. In this regard, the secretariat has made the following progress:

(a) Facilitating the organization by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, jointly with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, of a side-event on disaster information management on 24 October 2012 during the fifth Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, held in Yogyakarta, Indonesia;

(b) Providing the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran with technical assistance in support of developing the programme of work of the centre;

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(c) Establishing an advisory group comprising eminent experts in the region to provide the Executive Secretary with technical advice for implementing the resolution. The advisory group met with key officials of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran on the occasion of the sixty-ninth session of the Commission to outline the strategies for the implementation of the programme of work of the centre;

(d) Holding two subregional expert group meetings, in North and Central Asia (Almaty, Kazakhstan, 26-27 February 2014) and South and South-West Asia (New Delhi, 16-17 April 2014), to discuss the programme of work of the centre with representatives of vulnerable ESCAP member countries.

2. The Commission also requested the Executive Secretary to include in the secretariat's evaluation plan for 2013 an evaluation of the activities under paragraph 4 of the resolution and the need for, and benefit of, establishing the Centre as a subsidiary body of the Commission, and submit the results of that evaluation to the Commission at its seventieth session.

3. In this regard, the secretariat has included in its evaluation plan for 2013 the evaluation requested in paragraph 5 of resolution 67/4 and has formed an evaluation reference group to oversee the implementation of the evaluation in accordance with the resolution and the evaluation norms and standards contained in the ESCAP monitoring and evaluation system.

4. Also in this regard, the secretariat received a request from the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran via a note verbale dated 12 November 2013 to postpone the evaluation of the centre for one year, until the end of 2014, to allow the convening of subregional and regional meetings on disaster information management which are critical for the operationalization of the centre.

5. In this regard, the Commission may wish to request the secretariat to reschedule the evaluation for the end of 2014 and submit the results of the evaluation to the Commission at its seventy-first session.

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Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

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Item 6 of the provisional agenda*
Activities of the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission

Report of the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission

Note by the secretariat**

I. Introduction

1. The present document covers the activities of the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission during the period May 2013 to March 2014. The Advisory Committee appointed H.E. Mr. Lutfi Rauf, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary and Permanent Representative of Indonesia to ESCAP, Rapporteur, with the responsibility of presenting the report to the Commission at its seventieth session.

II. Activities of the Advisory Committee

2. During the period under review, the Advisory Committee held six regular sessions and four informal sessions to hear briefings by the secretariat on topics including the Asia-Pacific regional Millennium Development Goals report 2012-2013,[1] the ninth World Trade Organization Ministerial Conference, and the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development. At its regular sessions, the Advisory Committee discussed, among other things, the following subjects:

(a) *Outcome of the sixty-ninth session of the Commission*: In its review of the outcomes of the sixty-ninth session of the Commission, the Advisory Committee considered the major achievements of the session, including the adoption of 17 resolutions as well as 12 decisions, including a

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** The late submission of the present document is due to the need to take into account the outcome of discussions of the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission (ACPR) at its 353rd session, which was held on 24 March 2014.

[1] Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, Asian Development Bank and United Nations Development Programme, *Asia-Pacific Aspirations: Perspectives for a Post-2015 Development Agenda. Asia-Pacific Regional MDGs Report 2012/13* (Bangkok, 2013).

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decision on the dates, venue and theme topic for the seventieth session of the Commission.[2] The Advisory Committee commented that the session had been very successful primarily because of the strong partnership between member States and the secretariat, and that discussions had been very fruitful on a variety of issues, including on the theme study, the *Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2013*,[3] the Ministerial Panel on Sustainable Development and the development agenda beyond 2015, other high-level events, and the resolutions. The Advisory Committee commended the Executive Secretary and the secretariat for convening a successful session of the Commission, and expressed appreciation to the Government of Thailand for hosting the event;

(b) *Preparations for the seventieth session of the Commission*: The secretariat informed the Advisory Committee that the Economic and Social Council had endorsed Bangkok as the venue for the seventieth session of the Commission. The Advisory Committee reviewed the preparations made by the secretariat and provided advice and guidance on the dates and the provisional agenda for the session;

(c) *Resolutions adopted by the Commission at its sixty-ninth session*: The Advisory Committee provided advice and guidance on the implementation of the resolutions adopted by the Commission, in particular resolution 69/1;

(d) *Proposed calendar of ESCAP meetings and training in the period from January to December 2014*: The Advisory Committee reviewed the proposed calendar and was provided with clarifications on the proposed items;

(e) *Review of the draft strategic framework for the biennium 2016-2017*: The Advisory Committee reviewed and provided guidance on the draft strategic framework for the biennium 2016-2017 prior to its submission to the Commission at its seventieth session;

(f) *Work of the secretariat in the subregions*: The Advisory Committee heard regular briefings, via videoconferencing, on ongoing ESCAP initiatives in the subregions and the work of its subregional offices and regional institutions;

(g) *Review of the preparations for and the outcomes of the following meetings*:

(i) Third session of the Committee on Environment and Development;

(ii) Third session of the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction;

(iii) Third session of the Committee on Trade and Investment, and the Third Asia-Pacific Trade and Investment Week;

(iv) Ninth session of the Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology;

(v) Ninth session of the Governing Council of the Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization;

(vi) Ninth session of the Governing Council of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific;

(vii) Second session of the Forum of Asian Ministers of Transport;

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[2] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council*, 2013, *Supplement No. 19* (E/2013/39-E/ESCAP/69/27), decision 69/12.

[3] *Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2013: Forward-looking Macroeconomic Policies for Inclusive and Sustainable Development* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.13.II.F.2).

(viii) Asian and Pacific Energy Forum;

(ix) Sixth Asian and Pacific Population Conference;

(x) Ministerial Conference on Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration in Asia and the Pacific.

3. The Advisory Committee was briefed by the secretariat on the *Asia-Pacific Regional Millennium Development Goals Report 2012-2013*. The Advisory Committee welcomed the report and commented that the report was of great importance given the current global deliberations on the development agenda beyond 2015.

4. The Advisory Committee was also briefed by the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) and the ESCAP secretariat on the programme evaluation of ESCAP. The primary focus of the evaluation was on the research and analytical work of the Commission.

5. The Advisory Committee further heard a briefing by the secretariat on the regional cooperative mechanism on drought monitoring and early warning. The Advisory Committee noted that disasters were a key issue in the region and had a major impact on people's livelihoods, and underscored the importance of regional cooperation and knowledge sharing to mitigate the threats posed by such disasters.

6. The Advisory Committee was briefed by the secretariat on the implementation of resolution 69/1. The Advisory Committee expressed its appreciation for the plan of implementation proposed by the secretariat and constituted an informal working group to provide the secretariat with a sounding board on its work and analyses of the issues related to implementation.

7. The Executive Secretary also regularly informed the Advisory Committee of activities relating to the priority issues of the United Nations, as well as the outcome of her missions to ESCAP members and associate members, her attendance at major meetings, collaborative initiatives between member States and the secretariat, and on administrative and programme matters concerning ESCAP. The Advisory Committee expressed its continued appreciation for the briefings of the Executive Secretary, noting that it found them useful and informative.

III. Conclusion

8. In conclusion, the members of the Advisory Committee actively contributed to strengthening its deliberative and advisory role during the reporting period. The partnership between member States and the secretariat was further reinforced. The Advisory Committee provided important advice and guidance on important issues concerning the Commission and the secretariat, including on the implementation of resolution 69/1, organization of various intergovernmental meetings and initiatives of the secretariat.

9. At the same time, the Advisory Committee remained conscious of the need for stronger measures to ensure fuller implementation of Commission resolutions, improved coordination among all relevant stakeholders and progress on the economic and social agenda of ESCAP, in accordance with the development priorities of member States. Continued constructive collaboration and mutual support between the Advisory Committee and the Executive Secretary helped advance the Commission's overall goals and objectives and enhance its international profile.